Basic clinical skills - e-learning in the veterinary curriculum

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Basic Clinical Skills – E-learning in the Veterinary Curriculum

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Keywords

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Information technology in the form of on-line teaching, face-to-face video-cases and video-performances has recently been applied in the veterinary curriculum at the University of Copenhagen. By using IT in teaching of Basic Clinical Skills, we have managed to overcome many of the obstacles seen previously, and learning has not only been enhanced, but has also become much more fun according to the students.

Background and desciption

At the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, Basic Clinical Skills are taught in small groups in the seventh semester. Until recently the course has been dominated by teaching of concepts and theories by means of lectures and books. The method was time consuming – eating away valuable hand-on time, and was relatively dull for students and teachers alike.
Since 2006/07 a new method of teaching Basic Clinical Skills has been implemented at the department. By using e-learning, video-cases and video-performances the students are now presented with all the theoretical topics on-line. From their home computers they are guided through the theory by use of narrated Power Point presentations, and via videos can observe how to perform the different skills. The narrated video-demonstrations show them - step by step, how to perform the individual clinical or surgical procedure. Consequently, the students now turn up in class well prepared and ready to practise their newly acquired knowledge.
By placing all the theoretical lectures on-line we can now spend the entire length of the course practising hands-on procedures. In class, students work with in house dogs and cats, with stuffed toy animals, with cadavers and with research pigs. During the course the students are also shown video-cases, presenting them with clinical cases that they would otherwise have little chance of ever observing. Additionally, videos illustrating the problems of Client Communication are shown and discussed in the classroom. Finally, during the performances of surgical skills, the students are filmed, so that they can watch themselves on-line the following day.

Conclusions

The implementation of e-learning at the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences has resulted in a considerable improvement in the students performances in Basic Clinical Skills. The time saved by placing the theoretical lectures on-line has not only given us maximum hands-on time, it has also given us an opportunity to deal with subjects that were previously neglected because of the limited amount of time available. Finally, the possibility for the students to be able to *watch* how to perform a skill – repeatedly, if necessary, is a very welcome improvement to the curriculum.